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SEP 11 1964

CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

U. S. DEPT OF AGRICULTURE
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SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer, rather than for mass distribution. For more information about items appearing in this publication, write to the Editor, SERVICE, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

President's Consumer Message: President Johnson, in his special message on consumer interests, focused attention on four major areas: increasing consumer protections; increasing information for consumers; assuring the consumer's free choice, and giving the consumer an adequate hearing. "The American housewife--the major American consumer--cannot help but feel confused, and too often unheard, as she seeks the best value for the hard-earned dollar she spends," the President told the Congress. "This Government is pledged to come to her aid," he said.

FOOD FACTS

New Food Record in 1963. Americans spent an average of \$400 per person for food in 1963. That's less than 19 percent of their take-home pay--a record low in the U.S. And it's less than any other country in the world. In a year-end food report, U.S. Department of Agriculture says total food expenditures neared \$76 billion--about 3 percent over 1962. Population and retail price increases accounted for nearly half the increase. The rest? Americans shifted to more expensive foods and to convenience foods--bakery products instead of the raw ingredients, frozen french fries or shoe-string potatoes in a can in place of unpeeled potatoes in a sack. In 1963 Americans ate more meat, especially beef. They ate more chicken, more vegetables, but less fruit. And they ate less fish and fewer eggs.



Variety in Meat. No need for monotony in meals. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, you could serve a different cut of meat every day for four and a half months without repeating. That's the number of choices in kinds and cuts of meat you have in the stores in your neighborhood. Beef's an example. While there are about 43 different retail cuts ranging from tongue to tail (øxtail), most large markets regularly carry about 25 different fresh cuts. Not included are variety meats, like liver, kidney, tripe and sweetbreads, the frozen or processed meat products, which make for even greater variety. NOTE: Beef is now in plentiful supply and favorably priced.

Eat Better for Less. Which foods are the most economical sources of the nutrients you need for everyday good health? U.S. Department of Agriculture family economists say milk is your most economical buy for calcium--the nutrient most often short in U.S. diets. Milk is also your cheapest source of riboflavin, one of the B vitamins. Whole grain and enriched flour, cereals, and baked goods, as well as dry beans and peas, are inexpensive sources of seven of the nine key nutrients. Potatoes are a good buy in thiamine and niacin, two of the B vitamins, and in vitamin C. Best buys for vitamin C, however, are citrus fruits. By far the most economical sources of vitamin A are dark-green and deep-yellow vegetables.

How Much Chicken In the Soup? The U.S. Department of Agriculture has proposed minimum poultry meat content standards in poultry soup. A public hearing has been called on the subject for March 23. The hearing was set in response to requests from soup makers. USDA is also proposing minimum meat content standards for other convenience type poultry foods. The proposed new standards would provide more meaningful labeling for consumers.

Pasteurized Food? We've all heard about pasteurized milk. But how about pasteurized peaches. . .strawberries. . .figs. . .pears. . .asparagus? Well, U.S. Department of Agriculture marketing researchers are working on this--and with gamma rays. They are trying to find out how well such atomic age "pasteurization" will work in keeping fresh fruits and vegetables in better condition until they reach the dinner table. Tests are still going on, using gamma rays which do not result in radioactivity in the foods.

They're Redesigning Beef Cattle to Suit the Consumer. When it comes to beef, Mrs. Consumer has made her opinions known at the meat counter. She wants less fat and wasteful cuts. And she's getting action. The beef industry is looking for practical ways to produce a trim, high-quality beef carcass at moderate cost. A test program in Michigan works this way: Animals get identification tags or their weight is ticketed when they're marketed. Then each carcass or side of beef can be identified in the cooler by a marketing specialist from the Michigan Department of Agriculture. He evaluates thickness of fat, color and texture of lean meat, streaks of fat through the lean, and other characteristics. His report goes to an agricultural extension specialist who works with the cattle feeder to change the feed or breeding strain to improve quality. Co-operating in the test are the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Michigan State University, assisted through USDA's Matching Fund Program.

Smart Shopper Tip. Plentiful foods which will be good buys in March are eggs, peanuts and peanut products, beef, rice, broiler-fryers, potatoes, canned corn, canned ripe olives, and apples. In some areas, dry beans.

Freeze-Drying Food. By 1970, if production costs are cut by enlarging production facilities and expanding markets, freeze-dried foods can command a quarter-billion dollar share of the food market. USDA says that although freeze-drying now adds to the regular cost of food freezing from 7 to 17 cents for each pound of water taken out of the product, the extra cost can be brought down to 4 to 5 cents if full production is attained. Freeze-dry foods are light, need only water or other liquid added, and they're ready to cook or eat. Greatest potential use--partial ingredients for food to be further processed, as meat cubes and mushrooms in dried soup mixes, as strawberries boxed with breakfast cereals, as shrimp in creole or chow mein. Campers and hikers will find freeze-dried foods handy.

PLANTS AND INSECTS

Flea Beetle Becomes Sportsman's Friend. A flea beetle who survives only on alligatorweed--the weed which now chokes miles of waterways in the southeast--is now being imported by USDA researchers in a test effort to clear up the waterways. Alligatorweed can clog irrigation and drainage canals, ruin fishing, crowd out plants that furnish food for waterfowl, and interfere with traffic on navigable waterways. It also can endanger public health by creating mosquito-breeding areas. Plans to import the beetle were made only after extensive tests in South America proved that it doesn't eat plants useful to wildlife, or plants of any value as crops or ornamentals. Cooperating with USDA in the study were U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and State Agencies.

Sure an' They Scrutinize Shamrocks. As a service to Americans who participate in the annual St. Patrick's Day "wearing of the green," USDA plant quarantine inspectors will again examine about a quarter of a million small packages of shamrocks from Ireland and the United Kingdom. Shamrocks must be inspected because they frequently arrive with bits of soil on the roots which require fumigation in order to kill foreign plant pests. The major threat is posed by the golden nematode, highly destructive to potato and tomato crops.

RECREATION

Coming--More Recreation, Forest, Wildlife Areas. More places for Americans to relax and have fun are to be developed as one of the results of a special USDA pilot program. Farmers in 128 counties in 37 states have agreed to convert cropland to other income-producing uses, shifting 114,000 acres to grass, 5,900 to trees, 256 acres to wildlife habitat, and 8,300 acres to recreational facilities. That means more fishing, hunting, boating, swimming, hiking, camping, skiing, and other outdoor facilities.

YOUTH

Career Helps for Teenagers. An informal 4-H Club education program to help teenagers in rural and urban areas with career problems is rapidly expanding. The program works two ways: County Extension Offices call teenagers' attention to all the counseling opportunities available to them in their community--from high schools, colleges, employment services, civic organizations, or other groups. USDA also helps community leaders organize Rural Areas Development committees to review--and expand--local youth employment and training programs.

PROGRAM AIDS

Proper Diet Not Kid Stuff. Here's a new USDA slide series that clubs, schools, or other groups may borrow or buy to alert teenagers and adults to proper diet, and to stir corrective action. USDA research shows 6 out of 10 girls and 4 out of 10 boys have poor diets. Girls are often short of calcium, iron, and vitamin C. Boys lack calcium, thiamine, and vitamin C. Check with your County Extension Office about borrowing the "Improving Teen-Age Nutrition" slide series. Or, 35 mm slide series with script may be purchased from Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. Price is \$6.35 per set. Single frame filmstrip price is \$5.00.

Trade and Aid Summary Available. Clubs planning study programs on foreign trade and aid will find facts and figures on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Trade and Aid Program in the newly released Summary Sheet. For a copy, write Editor, SERVICE, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Ask for "Trade and Aid Summary."

RESEARCH

Research Payoff: New Product, New Jobs. Now in operation at Cashmere, Washington, is a new \$760,000 plant producing a frozen apple-juice concentrate--the first commercial use of a new apple-juice concentrating process developed by USDA research scientists. The plant, a cooperative, furnishes a market for about 50,000 tons of apples a year and creates about 100 new jobs. The new frozen apple-juice concentrate has a real fresh fruit flavor. Just add water, stir, and it's ready to serve.

NEW PUBLICATION

Here's Help with Food Budgeting. To help a homemaker choose the right food in the right amounts at a price she can afford, the USDA has a new booklet, "Family Food Budgeting." It gives five family food plans geared to different cost levels--from economy to liberal. Each plan suggests the kinds and amounts of food to buy weekly to provide a nutritionally adequate diet. And there's a long list of Food Cost-Cutter ideas that read just like money in the bank. For example, the booklet suggests buying packaged cereals and any other packaged food by weight and not by the size of the package. For a free copy of "Family Food Budgeting--HG-94," send postcard with booklet title and number to Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.